**Unit 1 --Novel/Book Summaries for a variety of diverse readers:**

Adventures of Tom Sawyer by Mark Twain……Lexile 950……Book level 8.0 –- AIG….304 pages

The story features the adventures and escapades of a young boy’s transition into becoming a young man during the mid-nineteenth century. The setting is a small town along the western frontier of the Mississippi River. The primary adventure features the aftermath of a murder that the boys witness. Main characters include: Tom, Becky Thatcher, Huckleberry (Huck) Finn, Injun Joe and Aunt Polly. The author captures universal experiences, dreams, and fears of childhood in this classic best seller.

Boy: Tales of Childhood by Roald Dahl…..Lexile 1090….Book level 6.0….176 pages

Roald Dahl’s autobiographical story recounts his days as a child growing up in England—from his years as a prankster at boarding school to a chocolate tester for Cadbury’s. The memoir is filled with entertaining tidbits of his adventures and eccentric upbringing. It takes the reader from Dahl’s days in Kindergarten to graduation from high school, with an introductory chapter on his parents.

Journey by Patricia Maclachlan....Lexile 630….Book level 3.8...83 pages

During the summer of his eleventh year, Journey searches for the reasons why his mother abandoned him and his older sister, Cat. They are nurtured by loving grandparents. The grandfather uses his camera and love of photography to help the children come to terms with their unstable mother’s departure. Novel can be read aloud to an entire class or read individually to discover themes abandonment and family. Book lends itself to interdisciplinary units of language arts, social studies, science, careers, art and music.

Phillip Hall Likes Me by Bette Greene….Lexile 900....Book level 5.0….144 pages

The novel is set in Pocahontas, Arkansas, and is told from the point of view of an 11-year-old 6th grade girl, Elizabeth Lambert. She has a crush on a classmate, Phillip Hall. He isn’t interested in girls and constantly aggravates her by ignoring her and claiming that a girl could never beat a boy in the annual 4-H calf-raising contest. It is a Newbery Honor book with simple vocabulary.

The Cay by Theodore Taylor….Lexile 860….Book Level 5.3….144 pages

In 1942, 11-year-old Phillip lives on the island of Curacao off of Venezuela during World War II. He and his mother attempt to escape the war and head back to Virginia on a freighter. The ship is torpedoed by a German submarine and sinks. Phillip survives, but is trapped on a barren island in the Caribbean Sea. He is blind from the accident and must try to survive with help from an older black West Indian man named Timothy. The message is that friendship is colorblind in this coming-of-age story. Awards include Lewis Carroll Shelf Award and Jane Addams Children’s Book Award.

Free literature guide: <http://books.google.com>

The Great Gilly Hopkins by Katherine Paterson….Lexile 800….Book level 4.6….160 pages

Gilly is a determined and unpleasant 11-year-old foster kid. She dreams of getting back to her (as she imagines) wonderful mother. She is placed in a new foster home with a “gross guardian and a freaky kid.” She is angry and mistrustful, but learns eventually about illusions and that maybe life with the Trotters—by far the strangest family yet—isn’t so bad. It is a Newbery Honor Book.

Touching Spirit Bear by Ben Mikaelsen….Lexile 670….Book Level 5.3….256 pages

Cole has been stealing, fighting, and bullying for years. He smashes a boy’s head against the sidewalk possibly causing permanent brain damage. He is offered Circle Justice: a system based on a Native American tradition that attempts to provide healing for the criminal offender. With prison as his only alternative, Cole plays along. He receives one year of banishment to a remote Alaskan island.

Tuck Everlasting by Natalie Babbitt….Lexile 770….Book level 5.0….144 pages

Winnie Foster is bored by a proper life and overly protective mother. She becomes friends with the Tuck family. The Tucks—mother, father and two sons, have inadvertently drunk from a well which freezes them in time and gives them everlasting life. They will never change, never grow old, and never die. Should Winnie drink from the well now, when she grows up, or decide to never drink the water? It is an ALA notable book.

Free study guide: <http://www.glencoe.com/sec/literature/litlibrary/pdf/tuck_everlasting.pdf>

The movie’s official web site: <http://disney.go.com/disneypictures/tuck>